



USAID | ROMANIA

Partnerships for Protecting the Environment

The Challenge



The Braila Water Treatment Plant was renovated with USAID technical assistance

In recent years, international concern for global warming has increased and Romania has been hit by natural disasters, especially the devastating floods of 2005 and 2006. Through these events and requirements for European Union

(EU) membership, Romanians realized that they need to take action to protect their natural environment.

In the early 1990s, a nascent Romanian environmental movement looked for ways to

marshal the resources needed to clean up rivers. Many rivers were sources of drinking water for people and animals. Romania needed to

improve the quality of the river water contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum residues, and other serious pollutants.



Pollution reduction of the Cris river was assisted by a USAID program

The Response

Romanians, with American consultants, developed laws and regulations to reduce pollution. More than 20 laws, as well as emergency orders and government decisions that deal with environmental issues and align Romanian legislation with EU requirements, were enacted.

The Ministry of Environment started to put pollution monitoring equipment at key sites around the country. It completed several feasibility

studies to improve water management capabilities, and to ensure access to water and sanitation. Companies implemented pollution prevention and waste minimization activities.

Romanian agencies and industries, with advice from American experts, began to implement pragmatic solutions to reduce pollution. These solutions utilized no-cost or low cost measures to improve environmental compliance and reduce costs by

minimizing waste.

Implementation of good, low cost management practices prevented seepage from leaking tanks into the ground water and soil pollution by used oil from old car engines. This effort reduced the costs incurred by municipal wastewater treatment plants due to toxic spills.

In 1996, the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and the University of Minnesota estab-

lished a partnership to offer graduate courses in eco-management. The most enthusiastic supporters of the Eco-Management Program are the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose strengthened capacity has made them equal partners in negotiations with business and the government.

The Results

- The Environmental Law, the Water Law, and subsequent regulations were drafted promoting private investment in pollution free technology for more efficient use of raw materials and improved environmental compliance.

- An integrated hydrological water management system was developed to reduce flood damage and related casualties.

- The National Environmental Fund was established, implementing critical pollution prevention and reduction projects.

- The Post Graduate Environmental Studies Program was established at the Technical University in Cluj. Over eleven years, approximately 320 students and managers from the public and private sectors were trained to address environmental issues both within business and at the country level.

- The Environmental Training Foundation was established and continues to provide critical environmental training.

- Operational costs were reduced, viability was increased and environmental compliance in various polluting industries and water utilities across Romania was improved leading to:

- a 90% reduction in toxic and hazardous pollutants, heavy metals, nitrates, organic compounds;
 - an annual savings of millions of dollars as a result of pollution prevention measures and improved operations.

- A Pollution Prevention Center was established to provide critical environmental services to both government and polluting industries.

- More than \$400 million was leveraged from the World Bank, EBRD, EU, Romanian Government, and U.S. EXIMBANK to build water infrastructure.

- Thousands of flood victims were assisted with immediate relief commodities or long-term reconstruction in affected communities.



Reduction of trans-boundary pollution in Oradea with USAID assistance

- The Government of Romania addressed, with USAID assistance, several accidental spills that occurred after 1992.



USAID assistance for an integrated water management system serving the Rausor Reservoir



Website: www.usaid.gov

USAID/Romania
The Embassy of the United States of America
7-9, Tudor Arghezi Street
Bucharest, Romania
Web: www.usembassy.ro/US_Assistance , www.usaid.gov